



**COUNTY OF LAKE
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April 6, 2021

The Honorable Cecilia M. Aguiar-Curry
Assemblymember, 4th District
State Capitol, Room 5144
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 14 Internet for All Act of 2021 (Aguiar-Curry) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry:

The County of Lake is proud to support the Internet for All Act of 2021 (The Act) which prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable, unserved, and underserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

The Act recognizes that reliable internet connectivity is a critical necessity now, and that this will remain the case even after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. This bill equips Internet Service Providers, Local Governments, and Tribal Governments with the opportunity to expedite the connection of their communities to reliable broadband access indefinitely. Further, The Act ensures grants administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) from the CASF are awarded to applicants who are willing and able to quickly and efficiently connect households, community anchor institutions, small businesses, and employers.

The capacity to rapidly connect all California residents with evolving emergency information is essential to safeguarding public health and safety during these unprecedented times. A Pew Research Study conducted in April 2020 found that roughly half of United States adults (53%) say the internet has been essential for them personally during the pandemic. As record unemployment rates persist, internet access is vital for economic recovery and resiliency. This is especially important for our most vulnerable Californians who remain disproportionately disconnected, including those who are low-income, living in rural areas, and Black or Latino.

The Internet for All Act of 2021 is a critical step towards expediting the deployment of broadband infrastructure throughout California. This bill provides a vital pathway to connect California's workforce to gainful employment, harness the life-saving technology of telemedicine, democratize distance learning, enable precision agriculture, and sustain economic transactions in times of emergencies. For this reason, the Internet for All Act of 2021 has our full support.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruno Sabatier, Chair

CC: Senator Mike McGuire